7: Stutte-Raemaeken T-3 (1950-51) 1953 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

Now they cover the building in white plaster all over, and the charming ornamentation in darts and trefoils is lost.

The oldest building in Shibam, the castle, which may be anything from 80 to 150 years old, still shows this decoration in horizontal bands of white round the windows. It seems an old bedouin tradition, for I have found it in remote bedouin villages. So all these old, charming and vigorous forms—dart motifs, broad bands, crenellated terraces, carved and nail-studded doors and graceful mucharabias for the ladies to look down into the street from the high terraces—are being abandoned. The present-day Hadhrami thinks them old-fashioned and copies the Indian and pseudo-Classic styles he has seen in Java and Singapore. Niches are filled in; and instead of the flat, low relief white ornaments (all shapes receding because the mud crumbles and the yearly rainfalls wash them away) we now find entablatures, pediments, balusters and pilasters, designed for much more lasting materials, like stone, and which here soon become shabby.

Shibam, the old-fashioned, has only just begun to suffer from this. Going, also, is one of the amenities of the Arab house: the coffee corner. In almost every room and terrace there was a little dais in a cool and shaded corner by a window where the master or mistress sat to make coffee for the guests. In the walls behind the dais there were niches specially shaped to take the pestle and mortar, the charcoal tin, the cups, and a small cupboard to lock away the precious ingredients—coffee, ginger and sugar. On the window-sill there was often a tall jar for the water and a runnel for waste water to flow away. Instead of these we now find the tea ceremony round the samovar in the middle of the floor, the little dais being broken away.

But we now move to the most fashionable of the Hadhramaut towns—to Saiywun and Terim and the many surrounding small towns. Here one finds a different type of people. There are many merchants too, but here we find another leading class, also great landowners in Java and Singapore. These are Sayyids, members of the eighty holy families, descendants of Mohammed, who live in these towns beside the lower classes. They have been the spiritual and temporal lords of the country for centuries. They have authority in matters of justice and civil affairs, and they are believed to have healing gifts. Until recently they were the undisputed rulers of the country. Now their power wanes before more democratic forms.

These people live in shining white palaces in the manner of *grands seigneurs*. They wear long white silk coats or the Indian silk longie and pastel-shaded shirts. The ladies, up till recently, wore heavy satin embroidered and sequin-covered kimono-like gowns, bunched into a low silver belt round the hips. Now these are forbidden as they cannot be washed. They wear their hair in hundreds of fine plaits. Up to the age of eight little girls may show face and hair, then they cover hair and neck with a close-fitting shawl and at twelve they go into purdah completely.

Their houses are built in a solid square block without inner courtyard and with windows on all four sides. Even the old streets are fairly wide in these towns that lie in the foothills. The more modern houses are surrounded by a walled garden. They are completely divided into two, one

661 with us ᶜAlī, an old and rather sour man, who was proud of
212 being able to read and who faithfully spelt out the names of
533 the places that we passed. When we had gone a little way
857 he asked if we would buy a pair of spectacles for him at the
463 *sūq*, the bazaar, of the Bandar (the seaport town, *i. e.*
221 Makalla) so that he could better read the Koran. Our third man, ᶜAbdallāh, is a very ordinary sort of Bedouin; he speaks little, but startles us time and again on the march by his monotonously ugly and melancholy Bedouin singsong: *"Yā dānā... ā... ā... āl"* etc. Finally there is little Muḥammad, an indefatigable boy of twelve, who is now having his first experience of a journey of this kind and who has never yet seen either the sea or a town. Besides these, a weaver from Makalla has joined our caravan with a baggage camel and two boys. We ourselves have an enormous camel that we call the *fīl* or elephant, a female camel for the milk supply, and a young and slender animal making its first trip.

● 292 The caravan leaders here wear a strange kind of sandals. Broad strips of leather cover not only the whole upper part of the foot but extend out beyond the sole, which makes a rustling noise in walking. It is meant to keep off snakes and scorpions, especially on night journeys. Because of the richer vegetation and greater moisture, these creatures seem to be more prevalent here than in the arid interior, where sandals are chiefly worn in the afternoon to protect the feet from the heat of the ground.

241 Nearly all the men of the village accompany us through the
311 palm-gardens to the river; we wade through the warm water
137 and then come to more date-groves. After that there are *dhura* fields, which finally give place to shrubs, grasses and acacia trees. We make a short cut where the river bends; the fringe of palms continues uninterruptedly beside the water.

114 Dhēb declares himself ready for *takalluf*, *i. e.* for doing his utmost, so it is perhaps possible that we shall reach Makalla in six days. As soon as we enter the region mapped out by Little, Von Wissmann is able to give up his detailed survey